

Fall 2015

## PARK NEWS AND INFORMATION

### MESSAGE FROM THE PARK MANAGER

I want to offer a big shout out to those of you who visited the park since our last edition of the Tributary was published in the spring. We had a great summer and are now looking forward to the fall and winter months, which offer their own unique qualities of beautiful scenery and a bit more solitude. Looking to the future, we will be scheduling some major construction during the winter months which will benefit the park, our ecosystem and our visitors long into the future. For starters, Bloede Dam will be removed entirely.

The elimination of Bloede Dam will entail removing 1500 feet of sewer line from where it is buried in sediment behind the dam. A new sewer line will then be run beneath the Grist Mill Trail. Once that work is complete, actual removal of the dam will begin. If all goes as planned, the project will take approximately a year and a half to complete. Work is expected to begin sometime this winter.

During this massive and important undertaking, areas of the park will be closed to the public. For example, there will be no public access west of Ilchester Road and just downstream from Bloede Dam. Additionally, there will be several other trail closures where trails intersect the Grist Mill Trail in the closed section of the park. There may be other closures and changes, as well. Stay tuned and informed by reading upcoming editions of the Tributary and be sure to visit our home page regularly at: <http://dnr2.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/central-patapsco.aspx>

Hope to see you in the park soon,

Rob Dyke

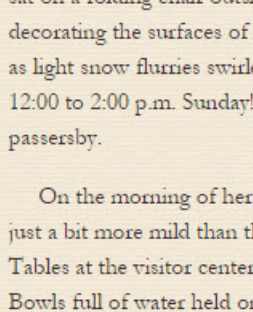
Park Manager

Patapsco Valley State Park

Morgan Run NEA

Soldiers Delight NEA

### THE EGGS HAVE IT!



**An All-Natural Egg-Dyeing Extravaganza at Soldiers Delight NEA on Sunday, March 29, 2015**

It was a chilly but gorgeous spring day in northwest Baltimore County, Maryland.

Participants lined up at the registration table outside the auditorium of the Soldiers Delight Natural Environment Area visitor center to register for Soldiers Delight Conservation, Inc.'s all-natural egg-dyeing program. A father arrived with his daughter, both bundled against the bracing cold outside. An adult crafter paid her \$5 entrance fee and took a seat in the room. A family of four found places at the long table. Each attendee dutifully toted a dozen raw eggs ready for decorating on the Sunday before Easter.

Lynell Tobler, vice president of SDCI, the Friends group for the globally rare ecosystem which adjoins Deer Park Road in Owings Mills, had been preparing for her egg event for weeks. In anticipation of the annual fundraiser, Lynell had wrapped 32 raw eggs in layers of moistened onion skins and sprigs of fresh parsley and dill weed, securing the ingredients tightly against each egg with copious amounts of kite string. Following a ritual she has been honing as a volunteer ranger and naturalist for the Maryland Park Service for over a decade, Lynell had hard-boiled four eggs in each of eight natural dyes, including water and vinegar mixed with chopped beets or red cabbage, chili powder, turmeric, grape juice concentrate, pomegranate juice or coffee grounds, then let them sit in their dyes in the fridge for several days to deepen and enhance their hues.

The day before her event, Lynell prepared the auditorium and then sat on a folding chair outside the Soldiers Delight visitor center, decorating the surfaces of two "sandwich-board" signs with bright chalk as light snow flurries swirled around her. "All-natural egg-dyeing from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Sunday!" the colorful chalkboards proclaimed to passersby.

On the morning of her program the sky was sunny, the temperature just a bit more mild than the day preceding. Lynell had everything ready. Tables at the visitor center were covered in festive yellow sheeting. Bowls full of water held onion skins Lynell had been collecting from local supermarkets for months, now softening in their cool baths. Paper plates on each table held bunches of fresh dill and curly parsley sprigs, the delicate fronds of each herb known to be best for impressing intricate designs upon the fragile shells. In the middle of the auditorium, a table displayed an array of natural dyes, along with a printed handout of instructions describing how to obtain the best tints at home. Scissors and kite string and marking pens awaited egg-adorning fans at each of 18 "dyeing stations" set up around the room.

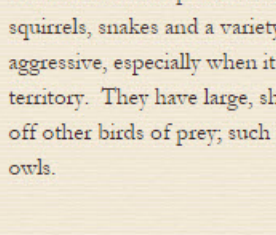
As participants shed coats and took their places at the U-shaped table arrangement, Lynell explained the unique patterns and colors imparted by herbs, vegetables, fruit juices and spices, extolling the virtues of using natural ingredients so that the eggs could later be enjoyed in salads, sandwiches or in that traditional harbinger of spring holidays: deviled eggs. The egg enthusiasts were ready to begin.

After demonstrating the somewhat intricate technique of affixing wet onion skins and leggy strands of parsley to raw eggs and covering them with string, Lynell and her helpers, SDCI board president Laura Van Scoyoc and volunteers Joe Thompson and Jesse Turner, assisted eager accomplices as they encased their own ovoid bundles. Meanwhile, Lynell unwrapped her previously dyed eggs and buffed them to a subtle sheen with a bit of salad oil and a soft cloth. The result was stunning. Green, orange, brown, blue and pink eggs mottled with impressions of frilly leaves were displayed on a crystal platter for all to admire. The finished effect looked like polished marble.

SDCI raised much-needed funds for their ongoing conservation and restoration efforts at Soldiers Delight NEA, and at the end of a fun-filled afternoon, happy folks took their tidily wrapped packages away with them to steep in nature's pigments at home.

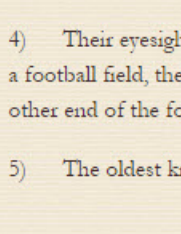
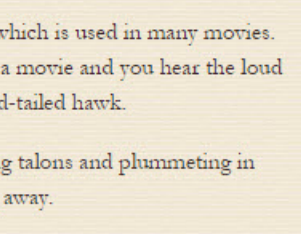
Submitted by SDCI Staff

April 3, 2015



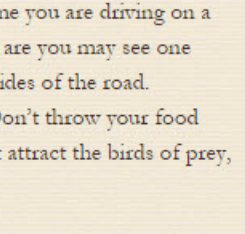
**Deviled eggs are imbued with pastel hues from natural dyes.**

**Lynell wraps eggs in her kitchen**



**Becca Thompson, 8, of Baltimore, wraps an egg**

**Ellen Lawson-McNeill of Owings Mills sent a photo of her finished eggs**

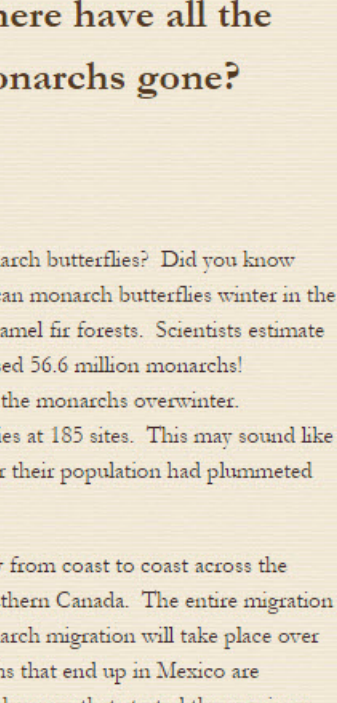


## CREATURE FEATURE

### RED-TAILED HAWK

Photo by: Laura Boellner

The red-tailed hawk is one of the most common hawks in Maryland; in fact it is one of the most common hawks found in the whole United States! The best way to identify a red-tailed hawk is to look at its tail feathers. They appear to be a brick red, thus giving this great raptor its apt title. Female red-tails tend to be larger than the males. Females can weigh anywhere from 31.7 oz to 51.5 oz, while the males weigh 24.3 oz to 45.9 oz. Red-tailed hawks are monogamous (they mate for life). They will build their nest together and typically build them in tall trees or on a cliffs edge. Some have even been known to build their nests on window ledges and billboard platforms. The nests can be as tall as 6.5 feet and up to 3 feet wide. Many reuse the same nest from year to year. Construction of the nest takes from 4-7 days.



Red-tailed hawks are "raptors" or "birds of prey", which means they eat live prey. Their prey can weigh anywhere from less than one ounce to more than five pounds and can include: voles, mice, rats, rabbits, squirrels, snakes and a variety of smaller birds. The hawks are very aggressive, especially when it comes to protecting their nests or their territory. They have large, sharp talons and they will frequently chase off other birds of prey, such as other hawks, eagles and great horned owls.

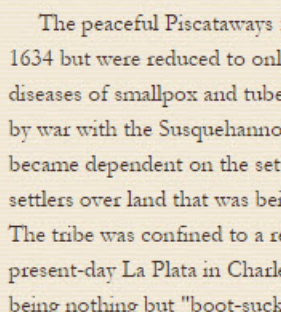
Some fun facts about red-tailed hawks:

- 1) They have a loud, rasping scream which is used in many movies. Whenever you see a hawk or an eagle in a movie and you hear the loud sound it makes, it is typically that of a red-tailed hawk.
- 2) Mating can include the pair clasping talons and plummeting in spirals toward the ground before pulling away.
- 3) They sometimes hunt in pairs, guarding opposite sides of the same tree.
- 4) Their eyesight is so good, if you held up a newspaper at one end of a football field, the hawk could see the tiny newspaper print from the other end of the football field.
- 5) The oldest known red-tailed hawk was 28 years 10 months.

They are typically easy to spot and once you have identified one, you will start to see them everywhere! The next time you are driving on a highway, look up at the street lamps. Chances are you may see one perched on the post scouting for prey on the sides of the road. (Remember the lesson two Tributaries ago? Don't throw your food scraps out the window! It attracts rodents that attract the birds of prey, and then they can get hit by a car!).

If you get the chance to attend one of the park's Scales & Tales programs, you just may get to see one of these magnificent creatures up close and personal. They are truly a beautiful bird!

Submitted by Donna Seymour, Volunteer Coordinator, PVSP



**Where have all the Monarchs gone?**

Photo by Mark Hollis

How much do you know about monarch butterflies? Did you know they migrate? 99% of North American monarch butterflies winter in the Mexican country's high elevation, oyamel fir forests. Scientists estimate that in 2014-2015, these forests housed 56.6 million monarchs! California is where the remainder of the monarchs overwinter. Volunteers counted 234,732 butterflies at 185 sites. This may sound like a lot of monarch butterflies, however their population had plummeted 80% since the mid 1990s.

Monarchs travel 25-30 miles per day from coast to coast across the United States and as far north as southern Canada. The entire migration can be a 3,000 mile round trip. Monarch migration will take place over several generations. So, the monarchs that end up in Mexico are generally the great-grandchildren of the ones that started the previous spring. What's amazing is these butterflies have never seen their winter habitat, yet they still manage to go to exactly the same place their ancestors started. No one knows exactly how that happens. Monarchs will also migrate to the same group of trees their ancestors did years before.

So, why has there been a decline in monarchs from previous years? One reason is due to illegal logging in Mexico. Vast amounts of habitat have been destroyed. Another reason is some of the stopover areas in the United States has been destroyed. Monarchs thrive on milkweed. In fact, it is the only plant the caterpillars eat. Throughout the Midwest farmers have destroyed milkweed habitat and replaced it with corn, soy beans and other crops. It is estimated that 60% of the region's milkweed plants were lost between 1999 and 2012. During this time period the Midwest produced 88% fewer monarch butterflies than it did before 1999. Not only have the milkweed habitats been destroyed, so have the nectar plants needed for the monarch butterflies.

Another issue is the use of pesticides and non native plants. There is a plant called a Swallow-wort that is related to the milkweed. Monarchs will lay their eggs on that plant, but their caterpillars cannot eat the leaves, and thus they die. Pesticides used on nectar plants and milkweed kill the caterpillars and butterflies when eaten. Extreme weather events have also been linked to the downfall of the monarch butterfly. Droughts, storms, heat waves and cold or wet springs can delay reproduction. These events likely to become more frequent with climate change.

So, what can we do to help the monarch? We can set aside areas on our property to become "Butterfly Habitat". Plant native milkweed and cultivate nectar plants. Avoid pesticides and fertilizers. Provide a resting place for butterflies, such as flat stones in sunny parts of your garden. Create a puddling area or place water in a shallow dish. If you get unwanted aphids, simply wipe them off the plants with a wet paper towel.

Just this spring Patapsco Valley State Park opened a walk in butterfly enclosure. We are popping up in parks and wildlife centers in the area. You can visit ours in the Hilton area of the park, next to the nature center. LaDew Topiary Gardens in Monkton has a large one and Irvine Nature Center just opened one in Owings Mills.

To learn more about how you can make a wildlife habitat for butterflies in your yard go to: <http://www.nwf.org/Pollinators/PollinatorDecline.aspx> through the National Wildlife Federation and learn how you can create a Certified Wildlife Habitat in your own yard!

For a list of common native plants and where to purchase them in our area and for more information, you can shoot me an e mail and I will gladly send you the information. [donna.seymour@maryland.gov](mailto:donna.seymour@maryland.gov)

Submitted by Donna Seymour, Volunteer Coordinator, PVSP

## WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE PISCATAWAY AND SUSQUEHANNOCK INDIANS?

These two tribes hunted in the Patapsco River Valley in the 1600s when the land area later to become "Maryland" was 95% forest-covered. The plentiful game included black bear, buffalo, elk, panther, beaver, turkey, bobcat, rabbit, deer, and squirrel plus fish, clams, crabs, oysters, and shrimp from the waters.



The peaceful Piscataways from the south numbered almost 2,000 in 1634 but were reduced to only 150 by 1675 after exposure to European diseases of smallpox and tuberculosis. Their numbers were also reduced by war with the Susquehannocks from the north, and the Piscataways became dependent on the settlers for life's necessities. They fought with settlers over land that was being taken from them for power and wealth. The tribe was confined to a reservation called Zekiah Swamp near present-day La Plata in Charles County. That area had been described as being nothing but "boot-stocking mud and mosquitoes". Many Indians fled to an area near present-day Point of Rocks on the Potomac River. They later fled to Pennsylvania and then to upstate New York to join the Iroquois, although some did remain near the Zekiah Swamp Reservation. Descendants of the latter can currently be found living in southern Prince Georges County, Md. Finally, those who moved north were absorbed into the tribes of the Mohicans and Delawares.

The dominant, warlike Susquehannocks in the region eventually became extinct after on-going violence between them and settlers after short-lived treaties and also with the Seneca Indians. In addition, a smallpox epidemic ravaged the tribe.

After moving southwest to Piscataway Creek (just below Washington, D.C.), they were feared by nearby farmers and plantation owners. Marylanders and Virginians formed military expedition of 1,000 men to remove approximately 100 Susquehannock men, women, and children from their wood and dirt fort. During negotiations, a family of settlers was found murdered, and the militia-turned-mob clubbed five of the six chiefs to death. The remaining tribal members escaped the fort, fled to Virginia, and killed 60 Virginia settlers in an act of revenge. After renegade Indians were hunted down and killed, the few remaining Susquehannocks fled to Pennsylvania, converted to Christianity, and were trained in the white man's ways.

Finally, in 1763 the Pontiac Wars broke out along the Pennsylvania frontier. Rioting settlers then massacred the last group of 20 Susquehannocks in a jail yard at Lancaster, Pa. where the Indians, fearing for their safety, had sought shelter and refuge.

Edward F. Johnson

Volunteer Ranger

Patapsco Valley State Park



**Volunteers with United By Blue doing a cleanup in the Daniels Area**

Photo by Kelly Offner

**Morgan Run - Work Day with Carroll County Equestrian Center Volunteers**  
Photo by Carolyn Garber



**National Trails Day Volunteers**  
Photo by Mary Jennys

**Allen Family attends Jan McCrumbs Leave it to Beaver program, Hilton Nature Center.**  
Photo by Donna Seymour



**Walk In Butterfly Enclosure in the Hilton Area of PVSP**  
Photo by Donna Seymour

For information on park programs copy and paste the link to your web browser:

[http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/pdfs/PVSP\\_SD\\_programs.pdf](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/publiclands/pdfs/PVSP_SD_programs.pdf)

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